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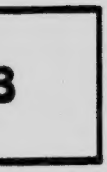

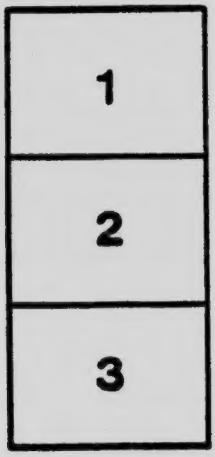

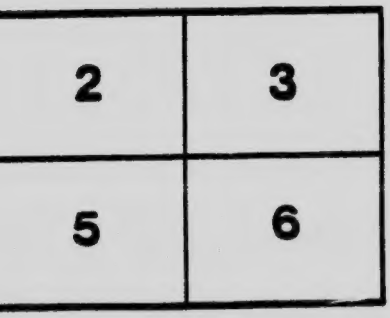

McGill Union.

McGill Union

McGill Union.

Every Graduate of McGill University is asked to read the present circular and to consider carefully the facts which it contains.

I.

During the past ten years a large number of Graduates' Societies have been founded by McGill men living in different parts of Canada and the United States. In each case the aim has been, apart from social considerations, to foster a McGill tradition and to unite Graduates in some work which might be of advantage to the University. At first the generosity of these Societies assumed the form of a scholarship or a prize, but recently there has been a disposition, in more than one quarter, to contribute towards a larger gift. What form the gift should take was at first an open question, but it was felt that the time had come for the four thousand Graduates of McGill to show their loyalty by works as well as words.

The project of a McGill Union took definite shape in Boston, the headquarters of the New England Graduates' Society. After consultation with leading authorities of the University and with several Graduates living in Montreal, Mr. H. Holton Wood and Mr. A. E. Childs offered to contribute $5,000 each as the nucleus of a fund. It was the deliberate conviction of those consulted that in view of existing necessities and the probable amount of the fund which could be collected, no other gift would be so valuable to the University as a Union. Accordingly Messrs. Wood and Childs headed a fund for the erection of a McGill Union, making it a condition of their subscriptions that a minimum sum of $65,000 should be subscribed by other Graduates.

II.

It should be unnecessary to dwell upon the benefits which McGill would derive from a Union. The dearth of social ties among the students was recognized by every one of us when he was at college and was universally deplored. When we contrast McGill with the universities of Great Britain or the United States, no single deficiency seems so glaring as the lack of intercourse among the students after

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they have left the class-room. That social activities are more numerous now than formerly may be freely admitted, but a common meeting-place for all members of the University is still wanting. On sentimental grounds most Graduates would wish to show personal sympathy with the Undergraduates whose feelings and tastes, one may presume, they have not forgotten. It is through the establishment of a Union that such sympathy can be most effectively shown.

According to general conception the Union is a building where the main social interests of the students centre. But while it exists primarily for the students, it should be a rallying point for Graduates and members of the staff as well. By promoting intercourse it serves a large number of desirable ends, among which may be mentioned the development of a corporate spirit and the entertainment of those who are friendless when they come to the University. In a word, the chief aim of the institution is to render the social life of the Undergraduates attractive. Here students of all years and ranks can meet together freely, not as members of their several Faculties but as members of the University.

"The Union," to quote from the first circular,* "makes provision for relaxation, amusement and general intercourse. It is a building which contains a large assembly hall or living-room, a reading room, a restaurant or café, a billiard room, a trophy room, a hall large enough to be used for meetings of the Literary Society or of the Athletic Association, and several smaller rooms for chess, for the Glee Club, for editors of the students' paper, and in general, for the smaller Undergraduate organizations." Architecturally it is made as beautiful as possible and its fittings are designed to have a certain educational value.

III.

At a meeting of Graduates held in the Windsor Hotel, March 4th, 1903, a large local committee was appointed to devise means for the collection of the $65,000 required by the conditions already mentioned. This General Committee in turn appointed an Executive Committee, composed of Alexander Falconer, chairman, Prof. C. H. McLeod, Doctor J. Alex. Hutchison, Doctor C. W. Colby and Doctor H. B. Yates.

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* As the mail service is not perfect, it may be stated that a circular on this subject was sent out in December, 1903, to every Graduate whose address could be ascertained.

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Between March 4th, 1903, and March 24th, 1904, the Executive Committee had secured subscriptions from eighty-five Graduates, amounting altogether to $11,665, or less than one-fifth of the minimun sum named. At the same time there had been few absolute refusals. The chief reason why the amount subscribed was so small can be briefly indicated. It was felt that the Graduates would be unlikely to collect more than $75,000, and that with such a sum it would be impossible to erect and maintain an establishment worthy of the aim which have been outlined.

IV.

The Executive Committee is now able to make an important announcement. On March 24th, Sir W. C. Macdonald, at the request of an influential deputation, signified his willingness to provide a building site and a sum of $100,000 in aid of a McGill Union, modelled on the lines already proposed. The news of this generous gift will be welcomed by Graduates everywhere, and will, it is hoped, prompt them to subscribe more largely than otherwise they would have done. Apart from the financial support which is thus forthcoming, the gift confirms the plea of the Committee that in the interests of the student body a Union is really needed.

While plans for the building are already in preparation and the work of construction will soon begin, the Committee would urge all Graduates who have not sent in a subscription to do so at as early a date as possible. In view of the present circumstances, it also becomes necessary to change the form of subscription. Sir William Macdonald has given this large sum on the undertaking of the Committee to continue its efforts to secure the $75,000, which it set out to collect. For land, building and maintenance, the completed Union will represent a capitalization of at least $200,000 It is urgently desired by the Committee that every Graduate will contribute as much as he can afford, in the hope of making up this total. Henceforth all sums should be given unconditionally and made payable at a date to be specified by the subscriber. A new subscription form is enclosed with this circular.

At the present time subscriptions aggregating about $21,764 have been received, but these represent the response made by a small fraction only of the Graduates. Heretofore the Graduates of McGill have never made any substantial gift to the University. The

contrast thus presented to the action of college graduates in the United States is sufficiently striking, and it should be remembered that in Canada the graduates of Toronto and Queen's have made large subscriptions to University equipment.

Relying upon these considerations the Committee asks every Graduate to give something towards the fund. Whether the amount be large or small, the evidence of college loyalty which is furnished by a subscription will be no less welcome than the amount itself. The Union project can no longer be called impracticable. There will be a McGill Union, standing on the corner of Sherbrooke and Victoria Streets. Let us make it a worthy rival of the Edinburgh Union, the Cambridge Union and the Harvard Union! This can be done with ease if every Graduate will recall the nature of the debt he owes to the University.

Signed on behalf of the Executive Committee,

A. FALCONER, *Chairman.*
C. W. COLBY, *Hon. Secretary.*

APPENDIX I.

To show that this project has the hearty support of the Principal and the Teaching staff, the Committee appends the following letter:

McGILL UNIVERSITY,

1st May, 1904.

We are glad to express our hearty sympathy with the efforts of your Committee to secure funds for the proposed McGill Union. We believe that the building which is to be erected will be of the greatest possible service to the students, while it will also establish an important tie between the Graduates and the University.

W. PETERSON, *Principal.*
T. G. RODDICK, *Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.*
CHARLES E. MOYSE, " " *Arts.*
HENRY T. BOVEY, " " *App'd Sc.*
F. P. WALTON, " " *Law.*
D. McEACHREN, "*former*" *Veterinary Sc.*

APPENDIX II.

The Committee desires to emphasize certain features of the proposed building and organization which will be of direct interest to Graduates.

All those who subscribe $100 or more will be called Foundation Members and as such will be exempt, in perpetuity, from the payment of annual dues.

The fee for non-resident membership will be placed at a low figure as is customary in similar institutions. Three or four bedrooms will be provided in the Union, which non-resident members can occupy for a period of six or seven days at a moderate charge. As there will be a Café in the building, this arrangement should prove convenient to a large number of Graduates.